

Jerralynn Ness

From: Farzana Siddiqui
Sent: Friday, February 06, 2009 5:19 PM
To: Jerralynn Ness
Subject: RE: Community Action Head Start in Washington County

Hi Jerralynn,

This is a very nice letter that reflects the quality work we do with our families. Thanks. Farzana

From: Jerralynn Ness
Sent: Friday, February 06, 2009 5:08 PM
To: Rep Chris Garrett; Rep Chris Harker; Rep Chuck Riley; Rep David Edwards; Rep Deborah Boone; Rep Jeff Barker; Rep Larry Galizio; Rep Matt Wingard; Rep Mitch Greenlick; Rep Scott Brunn; Rep Tobias Read; Sen Betsy Johnson; Sen Bruce Starr; Sen Ginny Burdick; Sen Larry George; Sen Mark Haas; Sen Richard Devlin; Sen Suzanne Bonamici
Subject: Community Action Head Start in Washington County

Dear Washington County Legislators,

On Thursday, February 5, many of you were visited by the parents of Community Action's Head Start program in Washington County. I want to thank you for giving us time out of your very demanding schedule. Community Action is proud to work in partnership with the Hillsboro, Beaverton and Tigard-Tualatin School Districts to make Head Start available to more than 900 low-income children, ages 0 - 5, in 47 classrooms. We hope these visits helped you to understand that in addition to providing quality early childhood education, Head Start addresses each child's health and nutrition needs and actively engages parents in the cognitive, physical and emotional growth of their child. And that Head Start parents also play an active role in the classroom and in leadership positions on the Head Start Policy Council.

One Head Start parent recently shared with us the impact that participating on the Policy Council has had on her life: "Through these opportunities, I cannot begin to tell you the things that I have learned, the leadership skills that I have developed, and the new sense of confidence that I feel within myself." Every day, we see the positive and lasting impact Head Start has on the entire family.

As you well know, early childhood education is the key to a successful start for children entering kindergarten and the launching pad for a lifetime of productive learning. This is especially true for children who have special needs or live in poverty. State funding of Head Start, through the Oregon Department of Education, is vital to Community Action's program. These funds matched with our federal grant and local support are allowing us to serve 952 pre-schoolers, or 48.2% of the eligible children in Washington County. With a wait list of 643 children, we are well positioned to immediately enroll additional kids if funding becomes available. Increased funding remains a top priority if we are to meet the state's goal, as well as our own, to make Head Start available to all eligible children in Washington County.

Thank you for your support and consideration of this important service to our most vulnerable families and children, which breaks the cycle of poverty and prepares children for success in school and life. We recognize that these are difficult times and that tough budget decisions must be made, yet there are few more impactful investments that we can make in Oregon's future.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you'd like more information about Community Action's Head Start program or have a tour. Thank you for your work on behalf of children and families in Washington County.

Sincerely,

4/7/2009